

**JOINT STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONERS MICHAEL J. COPPS AND MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

*Re: Applications Filed by Frontier Communications Corporation and Verizon Communications Inc.
for Assignment or Transfer of Control, WC Docket No. 09-95*

Today we approve a transaction that will result in a transfer of much of Verizon's remaining wireline operations in rural areas to Frontier. This has been a wrenching and difficult decision. As we confront concerns about delivering critical telecommunications service to consumers in rural areas of 14 states, we must also consider the financial viability of the acquiring company, the effect of the transaction on customers, the transition of operations from one company to another, the continuity of E911 services and the impact on jobs. It is our statutory duty to weigh the potential benefits and the potential harms of this transaction in determining whether it serves the public interest.

Reviewing the details of each of these concerns and projecting the future with or without the transaction (and without the benefit of a crystal ball) has been a weighty task indeed. There is no perfect solution. Upon full review, the options boil down to two—either a denial that would leave a status quo of poor telecommunications services and broadband access provided by a company that shows little interest in developing its rural business or an approval that holds promise for a future of broadband provided by a company that has shown enthusiasm in serving rural areas.

While those options appear to give us a clear direction, our approval of this transaction comes only after an unprecedented level of analysis from this Commission and significant review by most of the State Commissions involved. Moreover, Frontier has also made significant voluntary commitments to the Commission and to the State Commissions, bringing us to the conclusion that approval of this transaction is in the public interest.

In reviewing our specific concerns, we have conducted an extremely thorough review of the many variables. What we've learned from this in-depth analysis is that approving the transfer of the operations to Frontier appears to provide the better opportunity for delivering broadband to the affected rural communities, which have gone without it for too long. Based on the comprehensive information provided by the applicants, the Commission concludes that Frontier should be able to operate a viable business. The Commission and the companies have taken a lesson from the Fairpoint debacle. As reflected in the commitments, the Operations Support Systems will not be transitioned until all aspects, especially the needs of retail and wholesale customers, are addressed. Public safety experts here at the Commission have also reviewed this transaction, and—especially given the facility upgrades promised by Frontier—we see every reason to believe that E911 services will continue as required by the State Commissions.

Lastly, we understand—and fully expect—that approving this transaction will maintain and potentially expand much-needed quality jobs in these rural communities. We continue to be hopeful that Frontier will soon reach an equitable agreement with the Communications Workers of America, ensuring that the needs of Frontier's employees are respected.

We thank the Commission staff, the companies and other stakeholders, as well as our Commission colleagues who put in significant time and effort to make sure that this transaction is consistent with the public interest.